

REMARKS

The abstract and title have been changed as required.

The claim objections have been addressed as required. Withdrawal is respectfully requested.

Claims 11-16 stand rejected under § 102 on the basis of Shiraishi et al. '288. Independent claim 11 has been amended to describe the suspension construction of the parent to this application, now U.S.P.N. 6,690,546. Applicant traverses this rejection because that suspension construction is not disclosed (or suggested) by the cited reference.

Shiraishi et al. disclose a prior art technology described in the present specification. That is, after coupled flexure pieces 10 are mounted on head IC chips 17, the coupled flexure pieces are separated into individual pieces 11. Then, each slider mounted on a magnetic head element is mounted on the tongue portion 16 of the flexure piece (see col. 6, lines 8-55). The electric characteristics test of the head IC chip 17 is executed on the substantially flat flexure blank 11 by contacting a probe with the connection terminals 13 and 14 (see col. 5, lines 57-62).

The connection terminal 14 in Shiraishi corresponds to an external terminal 22 of the present invention, but in the present invention the external probe is provided to a side portion of the head suspension.

Further, head IC testing in Shiraishi is executed with the substantially flat flexure blank 11 by contacting a probe with the connection terminals 13 and 14 (external terminal), while head IC testing in the present invention is executed with the substantially flat

flexure blank by contacting probes with the connection terminals 21 and a measurement terminal 25, not an external terminal.

In this invention, after bending the side portion including the external terminal, head IC testing is executed on the substantially flat flexure blank. Therefore, since the probes are unable to contact the external terminal, the measurement terminal 25 is provided on the flat portion of the suspension in order to contact probes for head IC testing.

In Shiraishi, after executing head IC testing, it is necessary to bend a side portion provided for the external terminal 13. By this bending work, it is possible to decrease the electric characteristics of the head IC and its connection portion or destroy the connection with the head IC. In this manner, yields of the head assembly are decreased.

In the present invention, since head IC testing is executed after bending the side portion including the external terminal, it is possible to prevent decrease of the yield, that is, decrease of the electric characteristics of the head IC and its connection portion or destroy the connection with the head IC. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, applicant believes that this case is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The examiner should call applicant's attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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